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Message from the Mayor

There's been ample discussion in recent weeks about our use of red light cameras to enforce speeding and traffic laws in the District of Columbia. Too often, the conversation focuses on what I believe is a frustrating debate about the revenue that automated traffic enforcement brings to our city, versus the safety of residents and visitors. Here's the bottom line: automated enforcement is about protecting people—and the evidence shows it's working.

Our novel use of technology is making roadways and neighborhoods safer for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and residents in general. Since the launch of the Metropolitan Police Department's innovative traffic safety program, fewer motorists are running red lights and speeding aggressively—and that's saving lives.

Aggressive speeding is at a record low rate in our targeted enforcement zones. Only 1 in 30 motorists were found to be speeding aggressively in January in the enforcement zones, compared with 1 in 3 motorists when we started the program in 2001. With respect to red light running, the number of violations has dropped more than 75 percent in areas with cameras.

Speed-related fatalities have dropped 55 percent since we began using photo radar. Last year, we hit an 18-year low in traffic fatalities. When we started the photo-enforcement program, the average vehicle in our city traveled at 35.5 miles per hour on residential streets (which are 25 mph zones). Today, I'm proud to say that the average speed is 25.5 mph.

We now have cameras in every quadrant, every ward, on residential streets, arteries and highways. As Police Chief Charles Ramsey told the DC Council on February 23, our targeted approach to dangerous intersections is working. At the intersection of East Capitol Street and Benning Road, NW, we saw more than 1,100 violations in October 1999 (the first month that camera was in operation). In January 2005, there were 172 violations—a reduction of 85 percent. At Suitland Parkway and Stanton Road, SE, we saw 527 violations in January 2005, down from more than 1,600 violations in January 2000.

While we're pleased with our progress in reducing aggressive driving and ensuring safer streets, we still have issues that we're wrestling with. More than 8,000 people run red lights each month at our 39 intersections equipped with cameras. So I've encouraged MPD to expand our photo enforcement program and our traditional traffic enforcement efforts. We must continue to find creative ways to stop drunk driving, increase seat belt compliance and eliminate aggressive driving.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities
Department of Human
Services

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

Baseball and Its Benefits to the District

Two weeks ago, the Washington Nationals began spring training for a brand new season of baseball in the nation's capital. On Saturday, February 19, the city hosted its first major job recruitment effort to staff the Nationals' new home at RFK Stadium.

The "Grand Slam Job Fair" was held at the DC National Guard Armory to recruit for more than 900 new positions—floor supervisors, stand managers, cashiers, grill cooks, bartenders, and parking attendants—paying up to \$13 per hour.

Last September, when I announced baseball's return to Washington, I promised residents the return of the national pastime to America's hometown was about more than baseball:

- It's about community.
- It's about our kids.
- It's about bringing a major corporation to the District of Columbia—and spreading its benefits across our city.

We're already seeing that promise come true for our community. Major League Baseball committed \$100,000 to improving youth facilities in the city. In addition, all the profits from the April 3 Nationals exhibition game will go toward improving youth sports in the District.

We'll see that promise come true for our kids. At each home game, we'll make 500 tickets available for low-income residents.

And we're seeing that promise come true for our businesspeople. We set a goal of having Local, Small and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (LSDBEs) do 35 percent of the work renovating RFK Stadium. I'm proud to say they're doing 48 percent. Their participation adds to our already good record of working with LSDBEs—last year, 53 of our 56 city agencies complied with their LSDBE goals and awarded \$450 million in contracts to LSDBEs.

For our new ballpark on the Anacostia waterfront, I want the promise to come true, too. I want the citizens of the District—along with visitors from around the region and the country—to sit in a ballpark built by the hands and hard work of men and women from the District.

We're in the first inning of a long game. When the new ballpark rises, more jobs will come. More tourists will need hotels—and those hotels will need workers. More fans will need food—and those fans will need servers, and so on.

Get Ready for Cherry Blossoms

It's never too early to start thinking about spring and the cherry blossoms—even though we've seen two snowstorms in the past two weeks! This year's National Cherry Blossom Festival will take place March 26 through April 10, with more than 90 events and 150 performances and demonstrations.

The festival extends beyond the Tidal Basin with events, tree plantings and performances in all eight wards of the city. Typically, the festival draws more than a million visitors to the nation's capital—and this year promises to be another great one.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival has been celebrated in our city since 1935—it's Washington, DC's signature annual event. Each year, festival staff puts together the best spring festival in the nation! For two weeks, visitors and residents have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities celebrating the lovely trees.

The cherry trees, given to the United States by Tokyo Mayor Yukio Ozaki more than 90 years ago, remind us of the importance and beauty of the friendship shared between our two nations. What started as a simple tree planting ceremony on March 27, 1912, has created an important bond and friendship between the people of the United States and Japan.

As Mayor of this city, I wish this festival tremendous success and hope that citizens of the nation's capital and elsewhere in our nation take full advantage of all events and activities surrounding the Cherry Blossom festival.

For more information, go to www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

National Capital Medical Center

Over the past several weeks, there have been a number of questions about the status of our negotiations with Howard University with respect to the National Capital Medical Center.

As readers may recall, in late 2003, the DC Council directed my administration to negotiate an agreement with Howard University to build a hospital on the Reservation 13 site. This legislation stated that "the District's healthcare infrastructure is inadequate in part because of the uneven distribution of hospitals throughout the city." To resolve this inadequacy, Council directed me to enter into an agreement with Howard to build a new hospital on the site.

Last spring, Howard President H. Patrick Swygert and I signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was subsequently passed by Council. This MOU directed Howard University and my administration to perform financial feasibility analyses and to develop a financing plan for the new hospital.

We have spent the last year working with Howard to develop a vision for the hospital and to complete numerous market and feasibility studies. I am happy to say that we are well on our way to an agreement with Howard. We agreed on a vision for the National Capital Medical Center—a high-quality, comprehensive medical center that will be the hospital of choice for residents of its immediate service area and a destination hospital for key specialties. I envision the center as a backbone of the community's system of care.

As was agreed in the MOU, the District will contribute land for the hospital. In addition, the District and Howard have agreed to split the construction costs of the inpatient facility 50/50. The District will also cover the costs of basic infrastructure on the site. As directed by the Council-passed MOU, the proposed 230-bed hospital will be privately built, owned and operated by Howard University. Thus, the District will not provide any ongoing operating subsidy.

Since the time this MOU was passed, members of the Council, community leaders, and the leadership of other District hospitals have raised some important questions about this new hospital. We recognize that there will be challenges along the road to completing a project of this magnitude—in fact, some have been pointed out by our own consultants. But we believe these challenges are surmountable.

I'd like to highlight one challenge in particular. We are a region with porous borders, so we must address our healthcare issues across jurisdictions. I want to invite Prince George's County officials and Greater Southeast Hospital to enter into this dialogue with us and Howard University to determine if we can create a regional system supporting the healthcare of both jurisdictions and ensuring several strong hospitals that serve both communities.

One year ago, I committed to completing a feasibility analysis and developing a financing package for the National Capital Medical Center, and these tasks are now largely complete. Now, our City Administrator Robert Bobb and I look forward to discussing our analyses and proposals with key stakeholders to ensure that this new hospital meets the needs of the larger community.

National Women's Heart Day Health Fair

On February 18, I joined a host of health advocates at the MCI Center for the National Women's Heart Day Health Fair, launched by the Sister to Sister Foundation. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States. One out of every three women will die of it. The good news is there is much we can do to help prevent heart disease—and the health fair is a great way to raise awareness.

As individuals, we can take simple steps to make our bodies healthier and last longer. Part of this effort involves everyday commitments to diet and exercise. Too often, women do not recognize they are at risk. Heart disease has traditionally been a "man's disease." This could not be further from the truth.

As a city, we're committed to preventing heart disease. As you may know, our Department of Health has a Women's Health Initiative that aims to coordinate and integrate services across government agencies, private, and non-profit health care providers.

The World Health Organization has said, "There are two obstacles to vibrant health and longevity: ignorance and complacency." We're doing everything we can to make sure that women are informed and that they have the available resources to help themselves.

Continued



National Women's Heart Day Health Fair, (Cont.)

I encourage all of our residents to know the risks of female heart disease. They include:

- High blood pressure (hypertension)
- Smoking
- High blood cholesterol
- Diabetes

I encourage everyone to reduce the risks:

- Stop smoking
- Eat healthy (fruits, green vegetables)
- Treat high blood pressure
- Exercise (go to the park or to the gym)

Visit the District of Columbia Department of Health (DOH) website at <http://dchealth.dc.gov> to find out more about what DOH is doing to help prevent ill health.

Housing Authority Agreement

On February 16, I was pleased to announce that we've formed a new partnership between the DC Housing Authority and the Mayor's Office. This new partnership will focus on eliminating barriers to affordable rental housing for the District's linguistically isolated ethnic communities.

I am a strong supporter of expanding housing-choice opportunities and enhancing access to housing services for our Latino, Asian, and Pacific Islander families. Now, the Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) and the Office of Latino Affairs (OLA) have formed a partnership with the DC Housing Authority (DCHA) to provide rental housing assistance for some of the underserved segments of the District's population.



Under the terms of the partnership, DCHA will earmark 100 Housing Choice Vouchers for eligible Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander households referred by the Office of Latino Affairs, the Office of Asian and Pacific Islanders, or designated community-based organizations.

It's my continued goal that we make housing assistance information available to everyone—regardless of the language they speak—and this partnership will make it easier for people in the District's linguistically isolated ethnic communities to get this much-needed assistance.

The partnership between OAPIA, OLA and DCHA stems from the implementation of the "Fair Housing Promotion" goal within the District's Consolidated Plan with the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Fair Housing promotion goal addresses barriers to fair housing that ethnic minority households may face in the District's rental housing market.

Under the terms of the agreement, OAPIA and OLA will:

- Conduct outreach to inform the Latino and Asian and Pacific communities about DCHA's housing programs
- Refer households that may be eligible for assistance to DCHA
- Maintain a list of potentially eligible households

DCHA will:

- Train OLA, OAPIA staff and designated community based organizations in DCHA's programs
- Provide 100-tenant-based Housing Choice Vouchers in support of this effort.



District Activities



Mayor Williams delivers remarks at the National Women's Heart Day Health Fair. The Mayor is joined by the District's First Lady and health fair co-chair Diane Simmons Williams, and Sister to Sister founder Irene Pollin. Each year, Sister to Sister sponsors National Woman's Heart Day.



Mayor Williams delivered remarks at the Winter Seasonal Black History Month Poetry readings. The event featured actor David Mills, performing the works of Langston Hughes, and DC Poet Laureate Dolores Kendrick.

Community News

- [District's Assessments Reflect Continued Strong Real Estate Market](#)
- [DC Attorney General Recoups Thousands of Dollars for Consumers Nationwide](#)
- [Mayor Travels to Florida for Spring Training](#)

[View All News Releases](#)

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 3/2
to
3/13 | Independent Film Festival (DCIFF)
5:30 pm – 11 pm (Times vary with each session: see below times)
City Museum of Washington, DC
801 K Street NW
Seminars: Thursday, March 3: 2 pm – 5:30 pm; Saturday, March 5: 9:30 am – 4 pm
Film Screenings: 5:30 pm – 12 am (weeknights), 12 pm – 1 am (weekends)
Trade Show: 10 am – 7 pm (weekends), 5 pm – 10 pm weeknights |
| 3/12 | International Wine and Food Festival
1 pm – 5 pm
Washington Convention Center
801 Mount Vernon Place, NW |

